



Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

NEWSLETTER for PARENTS & CARERS
Week Ending: 30/01/2026.

Edwinstree Term dates:

[Term Dates 2025-26 & 2026-27.pdf](#)

Homework week: B

Diary Dates:

02-05/02/26	Year 6 Mock SATs
03/02/26	Year 8 Foundation Evening 5-7pm
11/02/26	Year 7 Lieutenancy Visit
16-20/02/26	Half Term
24/02/26	Academic Consultation 4-7pm 6A Maths and English 6D Maths and English
25/02/26	Author Imran Ahmad visit to Year 8
03/03/26	Academic Consultation 4-7pm 6B Maths and English 6C Maths and English
04/03/26	Y7 Foundation Evening 5-7pm
27/03/26	End of Term 1:20pm.
13/04/26	Start of Summer Term
21/04/26	Y6 Foundation Evening 5-7pm
04/05/26	Bank Holiday
11-14/05/26	Year 6 SATs
12/05/26	Y5 Foundation Evening 5-7pm
19/05/26	Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation for Year 8.
25-29/05/26	Half Term
26/06/26	INSET Day
09/07/26	County Transition Day
17/07/26	End of Term 1:20pm.

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Mobile Phone Policy

The Government issued a new guidance for schools around mobile phones this week. There is a link below to this.

Having viewed the guidance, we believe we currently meet the criteria with one exception. The guidance requires schools to remove phone use from the start of the school day until the end. Our students store their phones in trays near the office from tutor time until the end of the school day, we will consider in September whether we ask students to not have their phone in use before school but will consult with both you and your child. Currently children who arrive early to school particularly in winter use their phones in the hall with friends. At the moment this will continue.

Our one exception is that we have used mobile phone devices for lessons, as this is a rich resource and has meant that our tight budgets have not had to source other devices. We will now need to look in our new budget in April to see if we are able to source for September devices for lessons where we wish to use a variety of apps and/or the internet to support the lesson. One subject in particular which uses the mobile phone is Life Skills. For example,

A number of LS lessons rely on a phone, e.g. the cost of housing/salaries when studying money, they are also used in this lesson for online safety quizzes and anonymous surveys for challenging topics. Life skills is also the subject that tackles wellbeing and how to use a mobile phone well and safely.

For the moment, no child is penalised for not having a phone in this lesson as we provide other devices and/or share, but we will have to consider deeply whether we can continue from September and/or can we fund access to a different set of resources. Again, we will consult with yourselves over this.

Below is the new policy if you would like to read it.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools#communicating-the-policy-to-pupils-and-parents>

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WhatsApp guidance

While the Government continues to consider whether WhatsApp, Snapchat and other social media groups should be allowed for under 16. Parents, students and the school continue to face challenges from children who are unable to manage large social media group chats that fall into chaos and abuse. This week a significant group of year 5's alongside one or two older children fell into abusive, racist and offensive language as part of their group chats. We are so very grateful to the parents who reported this into the school, so that we could address this. It has been horrible to talk to lovely children who when shown the posts they have created in anger, and addiction have been horrified and ashamed.

As a parent, if you continue to allow your child into these group chats, could we please stress that you monitor heavily your child's usage.

WhatsApp age range is 13 for a reason. We agree with those parents who are ensuring that their children, if they have a phone, are only using small group chats with friends they know.

One year 5 parent told us about their kitchen phone, a phone that stays in the kitchen and is shared with the family, where chats etc can take place but monitored heavily.

We can't stress enough how inappropriate these chat groups are and how quickly they can disintegrate, just like adults, into abuse and anger. We teach children that AI devices deliberately post the negative news to the top of a chat group, rather than any posts that are positive.

Attached with this newsletter is further parental guidance about WhatsApp which you may find useful in supporting your child if they are using this app. Please help your child to manage their social media footprint and what they access if they have a phone. Thank you for any help you can offer.

Food and Nutrition – All Years

It has been a fantastically busy week in the Food Room. Lots of colour, lots of lovely smells, lots of creativity and lots of happy children!

Year 5: Well done on your cheese straws! Some excellent rubbing in and baking skills. Well done to all who took the plunge and worked with the oven independently.

Year 6 and Year 7: I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing you create a dish that encompasses our healthy eating ethos. Your nutrient variation and choice of rainbow ingredients has inspired me to try a few of your combinations. Delicious!

Year 8: All projects are due next week – please check your due date. There are no extensions on this as I need to get the assessment marks ready for reports and Freman. Failure to hand your project in will result in a no cook session on the last practical - which is the day your project is due. You have had 2 sessions in school and 2 home learning sessions which is ample time to get it done. I have already had the pleasure of marking some projects which have been full of detail and eye catching in design. Most impressed by the quality of work so far.

A reminder to return any tubs borrowed this week please. If your child has not brought your container home, please do ask them to come and look through the shelf of small pots - it has grown rather full over the past month or two. Mrs van Wyk

Year 6 News:

Year 6 SATs

Mock SATs 02/02/2026 – 05/02/2026

Official SATs 11/05/2026 -14/05/2026

Students have their mock SATs next week and we have been asked by some parents about how to help their child with reading at home in the lead-up to the actual SATs in May.

To support your child in the lead up to the SATs, our best advice is to encourage them to read at home. This will help them improve their fluency for the reading paper and will also benefit them in the GPS paper and the Maths reasoning papers.

Please find a short video (linked below) to give some tips on supporting your child with their reading and reduce their anxiety around the exam. In the past parents have expressed that this practice has helped. I hope this is of some help. Please get in touch via the office if you have any questions!

<https://youtu.be/Lf1ABN2pNml>

Children will begin their day as normal and register in their form rooms. The mock SATs is our opportunity to identify children needing additional support and an opportunity for the children to have a trial run so that nothing will come as a surprise to them in May.

Please take a look at the link below which gives some great advice on maintaining the children's wellbeing, as that is our top priority during this time. [Looking After Yourself During SAT's :: Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)

During SATs week, please make sure your child gets plenty of rest each night and goes to bed at a reasonable time. A good breakfast will help support their concentration, and we ask that all children arrive at school by 8:30am.

Support for SATs from any year group parent and family.

We are still chronically short of helpers, are you available? Our most vulnerable children do not have the help they need, in reading, or scribing and we do not have the funds or capacity to fund 10 – 15 more staff than the 14 volunteers we already have. CAN YOU HELP?

Do you have a relative who would give up 3 hrs in the mornings of SATs weeks?

Mock SATs: 02–05/02/2026 & **Official SATs:** 11-14/05/2026 IT IS NOT TO LATE TO HELP.

Duties include supporting teachers in the classroom and working with students as a reader, scribe, or prompt. We will provide a short amount of training for this on the day. Many students require this support, and we are always incredibly grateful to anyone who volunteers, as this ensures that all students receive the support that they need.

If you can help on any of the days, please complete the following form. [SATs helpers for 2026 – Fill in form](#)

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Year 8 News:

We are aware that some Year 8 students have recently been bringing flasks of boiling water and instant noodles for their snacks and/or lunch.

For safety reasons, we kindly ask that students do not bring boiling water or items that require boiling water into school. Carrying and opening containers of extremely hot liquid poses a significant risk of burns and injury to both the student and others around them. Thank you for your support in helping us keep everyone safe.

Universal Credit / Free School Meals

We have received communication from DfE regarding plans as from September; to provide any child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit, with a free school meal. Currently Free School Meals are means tested, therefore, there is an income cap on this claim. With this in mind and in anticipation of this change, we are looking to have an idea of uptake and capacity for our kitchen.

We ask for your support in this, by taking the time to **anonymously** complete this short survey, if you are someone who currently receives Universal credit and therefore could be eligible.

[Universal Credit Survey – Fill in form](#)

Please note that if you are in receipt of Universal Credit and from September you would like to apply for Free School Meals, we will guide you to contact the school office to help process this claim. It will not automatically be applied to your School Grid account.

Parent Guide to School Complaints

A new guide which aims to help parents work with schools to address complaints in a positive and respectful way has been published by the DfE, the charity Parentkind, and Ofsted. Parents are advised against using social media to air their complaint, and told to avoid behaving aggressively, targeting people, or “building a crowd” around their concern.

We hope that a clear set of ground rules will help to ease the pressure on schools of vexatious and personalised complaints and support the good and productive relationships with parents we all want to see.

<https://www.edwinstree.herts.sch.uk/parents/parent-guide-to-school-complaints.aspx>

Edwinstree Vacancies

Please see our link to our website for details of our current vacancies

<https://www.edwinstree.herts.sch.uk/school/vacancies.aspx>

- Learning Support Assistant
- Data & Student Support Administrator

SEND Health and Wellbeing Survey 2025

4 weeks left to complete the 2025 health and wellbeing survey for children and young people (CYP) aged 11 -25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Hertfordshire will close on Friday 6th February 2026.

Introduction video

A short introduction video on the survey to share with young people can be found via the link: [Introduction to the SEND Young People's Health & Wellbeing Survey - YouTube](#)

Completing the survey

The survey can be accessed on a computer, laptop, tablet or mobile and will take varying times to complete depending on the age and needs of your young people. This year there is a ‘save and continue’ function to the survey, therefore, if necessary, a young person can take more than one session to complete. At the start of the survey students will select their school/college from the list or select ‘other’ if not attending a SEND school.

Many young people completing this survey may require support and its recommended they are also given assurance that the information collected is anonymous and where questions are personal young people are given privacy to answer.

Benefits of the survey

The process of supporting young people to complete this survey initiates conversations on the following themes.

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Healthy eating and physical activity
- Smoking and vaping
- Sexual health
- Safety and bullying

The survey results provide commissioners and a range of agencies with useful data on the Hertfordshire SEND young person population, including enabling effective service delivery that meets the needs of SEND young people and their families.

Professionals who work with or for young people will be able to access summary reports online, containing county and district level information about young people’s health behaviours. SEND schools and colleges receive an individualised report if pupils submit over 50 completed surveys.

To access the survey, follow the link:

[Young People's Health & Wellbeing Survey \(SEND\)](#)

or the QR code below:



This survey contributes to Hertfordshire County Councils wider SEND improvement strategy and in particular the SEND children and young people’s voice. For further information or to receive support with implementing this survey please contact yphws@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Out of School Hours Activities

As February Half Term fast approaches, please promote the **half term activities for young people with SEND**. Services for Young People is offering free adventurous outdoor activities to young people aged 13-19 with SEND, including those with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. All activities develop social, emotional, and physical skills in a safe and supportive environment. The activities are funded by HCC Short Breaks and young people are eligible up to the year they turn 19 if they are in full time education. If you work with or know any eligible young people, please signpost them or their parents/carers to the Services for Young People website where they can get full details and [sign up](#).



Families Feeling Safe Courses

Families Feeling Safe have three online courses starting next week funded by HCC Targeted Parenting Fund. We have one course funded for Dads and male carers and two courses for mums, dads and carers who may need some

additional support. We've had a good response however we do have a few places available particularly on our dad's course. Would you kindly help us fill these places by sending on to your colleagues who may want to refer and to parents and carers. We have one online booking form now that can be used by professionals and parents and carers for all courses and

bookings: <https://forms.office.com/e/AhqfPJUW6T>

- For Dads & male carers – Thursday evenings 7.00pm – 9.00pm 5 February – 26 March (excluding half term)
- For Mums, Dads & carers – Wednesday mornings 9.30am – 11.30am 4 February – 25 March
- For Mums, Dads & carers – Wednesday evenings 7.00pm – 9.00pm 4 February – 25 March

These fully funded 7-week term time courses can help with:

- Understanding how Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour link together (including the stress response system)
- Understanding what may be influencing their child's behaviour
- Responding to a range of feelings e.g. anger, frustration, anxiety, stress and worry
- Improving communication to build better relationships
- Building on strengths
- Learning strategies to help parents and their family feel safe

If you have any questions, please do let us know.

Mrs J Gant - Headteacher
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